

The Sheltering Shadow

Psalms 91:1-8

Are you afraid of shadows?

5-year old Johnny was in the kitchen as his mother made supper. She asked him to go into the pantry and get her a can of tomato soup, but he didn't want to go in alone. "It's dark in there and I'm scared." She asked again, and he persisted. Finally she said, "It's OK—Jesus will be in there with you." Johnny walked hesitantly to the door and slowly opened it. He peeked inside, saw it was dark, and started to leave when all at once an idea came, and he said:

Jesus, if you're in there, would you hand me that can of tomato soup?"

Where do you take refuge?

One summer night during a severe thunderstorm a mother was tucking her small son into bed. She was about to turn the light off when he asked in a trembling voice, "Mommy, will you stay with me all night?" Smiling, the mother gave him a warm, reassuring hug and said tenderly, "I can't dear. I have to go sleep in Daddy's room." A long silence followed. At last it was broken by a shaky voice saying, "The big sissy!"

So, how about you? Are you afraid of shadows? What do you fear?

Today we are looking one of King David's Psalms where he sings about his source of comfort and security. He states that because of his relationship with God, he is not afraid of things that most people would find scary. In these verses, David states where he stands, his opinion of God and how that affects him. So, the question comes back to each of us ...

Where Are You? (v. 1)

What Do You Say? (vv. 2-4), and...

Whom Do You Fear? (vv. 5-8)

I. Body

A. Where Are You? (v. 1)

a) **Are you hiding "from" or hiding "in" God?**

1. Two states of mankind

a) from Genesis 3:9 -- "Adam, where are you?"

b) to Song of Solomon 2:14 --

(1) O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,
In the secret places of the cliff,
Let me see your face,
Let me hear your voice;
For your voice is sweet,
And your face is lovely.

2. Two shadows

a) under His shadow

(1) Psalm 31:20 -- You shall hide them in the secret
place of Your presence From the plots of man

(2) Psalm 36:7 -- How precious is Your lovingkindness,
O God! Therefore the children of men put their
trust under the shadow of Your wings.

b) the shadow of death (Ps. 23)

(1) v. 4 -- Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are
with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

3. One God

a) Most High

(1) from the root word for "possession"

(2) He is God over all that is or ever was

b) Almighty

(1) from the word for "provision"

(2) our God supplies our needs

c) The Lord

(1) the relational name of "promise"

(2) Jehovah, the eternal, unchanging One

4. His Name is I AM

- a) Joel Preston writes, "I was regretting the past and fearing the future. Suddenly my Lord was speaking: "My name is 'I AM.'" He paused. I waited. He continued, "When you live in the past with its mistakes and regrets, it is hard. I am not there. My name is not 'I WAS.' When you live in the future with its problems and fears, it is hard. I am not there. My name is not 'I WILL BE.' When you live in this moment, it is not hard; I am there! My name is 'I AM!'" "

5. Our Promise

- a) 1 John 4:16 -- And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.
- b) Matthew 11:28-29 -- Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

B. What Do You Say? (vv. 2-4)

a) **What is your relationship with God?**

1. He is...

a) my refuge

b) my fortress

c) my trustworthy God

d) Psalm 125:2 -- As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
So the LORD surrounds His people
From this time forth and forever.

e) 1 Peter 1:5, writes about believers saying -- "you, who
are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation..."

2. During the Civil War a Union soldier from Ohio was shot in the arm. His captain saw he was wounded and barked out an order, "Gimme your gun, Private, and get to the rear!" The private handed over his rifle and ran toward the north, seeking safety. But after going only about two or three hundred yards, he came upon another skirmish. So he ran to the east, and found himself in another part of the battle. Then he ran west, but encountered more fighting there. Finally, he ran back to the front lines shouting, "Gimme back my rifle, Cap'n. There ain't no rear to this battle nowhere!"

3. Just in case you haven't discovered this yet... "there ain't no rear to this battle called life!"
But there is a shelter, refuge and fortress...God Himself!

4. He will...

a) deliver me

b) cover me

c) Deut. 32:11-12a -- As an eagle stirs up its nest,
Hovers over its young,
Spreading out its wings, taking them up,
Carrying them on its wings, So the LORD alone led
[His people]

d) Jesus' desire to cover His people, Israel -- Matt. 23:37 --
"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets
and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted
to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her
chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

C. Whom Do You Fear? (vv. 5-8)

a) **The focus of your fears describes your faith**

1. I can be afraid of all the "stuff" that is "out there," or I can be afraid of missing out on a full relationship with God through Christ
2. Things we might fear
 - a) the day
 - (1) arrows and destruction
 - b) the night
 - (1) terror and pestilence
 - (2) Psalm 3:5 -- lay down and slept;
I awoke, for the LORD sustained me.
3. Where we can stand
 - a) in His shadow
 - b) you shall observe in safety
 - c) Ezekiel 9:4 -- says the Lord marks His own.

D. Psalm 27:8 -- When You said, "Seek My face,"
My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek."

E. Lord, come yourself

1. As a hurricane quickly approached a small coastal town, all the people had hurried to the town's shelter. There they were huddled together in a dark with the winds howling, sheets of rain beating down and the door of the shelter just about to rattle of its hinges!
Everyone huddled in the shelter had their eyes fixed on the door for they knew that is it were to blow off that everyone would be sucked out of the shelter by the hurricane.
The town's elderly pastor stood up in their midst and began to pray w/ great oratorical effects... crying out he prayed "Lord...
-Send us the spirit of the children of Israel. -The spirit of the children of Moses and -The spirit of the children of the Promised Land."

At this, an old man not as polished but certainly direct cried out in prayer..

"Lord, don't send nobody....You Come yourself !...This ain't no job for children."

F. A change of mind -- Phillipians 4:6-8 -- Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

II. Conclusion

A. Where are you, this morning?

1. Have you moved from separation from God to being sheltered by Him?

B. What do you say about God?

1. Is He your refuge? Your fortress?
2. Will He deliver and cover you?

C. Of whom are you afraid?

1. Men or God?
2. Perhaps you require a change of mind?

D. I Can't Remember Which You Were

1. Have you heard about the Desert Storm soldier who while he was overseas received a Dear John letter from his girlfriend back home in the states. To add insult to injury, she wrote, ... "Will you please return my favorite photograph of myself-- I need it for my engagement picture in the local newspaper."
The poor guy was devastated, but all the soldiers came to his rescue. They went throughout the entire camp and collected pictures of all the guys' girlfriends. They filled up an entire shoe box and sent it to the girl along with a note from the guy saying, "Please find your picture, and return the rest, for the life of me, I can't remember which one you were!"
2. Aren't you glad that God knows which one you are and that He has promised to care, guide, protect and provide for you all the days of your life!